"Following a human intervention of the right kind, Nature will often take over and heal itself. What is needed is not esoteric knowledge and technologies but simply good management and social will."

René Dubos, *The Resilience of Ecosystems*, 1978

Restoration

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Once dominant in the understory of the Catoctin Mountain Park forest, the flowering dogwood was devastated by fungal disease in the 1980s and 1990s. This aesthetically and ecologically valuable tree species is being restored experimentally thanks to clones propagated from seeds and cuttings of a disease-resistant specimen discovered in the park.

If the creation of a national park, as Dr. Shirley Malcolm of the National Park System Advisory Board has said, "is a contract with the future," then restoration of park resources is reconciliation with the past. In recognition of what once was and should once again be, the National Park Service strives to restore degraded resources to health and function. Carrying out this vision involves an interesting blend of science and art. Ecological restoration integrates the professional training, technical know-how, creative talents, and judgment of ecologists, geologists, hydrologists, environmental engineers, endangered species experts, heavy equipment operators, and many other resourceful specialists. Whether working to restore dogwoods in the East, native plants in Hawaii, wetlands in the Rocky Mountains, or butterflies in the West as some of the following articles detail for 2002, the process is about hope that compromised ecosystems can be nudged toward wholeness and well-being. Results often take decades or longer to develop completely, and then—ironically—a skillful restoration may go unnoticed. Yet if the National Park Service fulfills this aspect of its contract with the future, its efforts to restore resources will not be unappreciated.